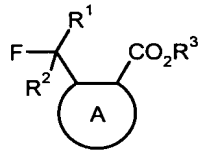
AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Claims 1-17 (canceled)

Claim 18 (currently amended): A process for preparing fluoromethyl-substituted heterocycles of formula (I)



(I)

in which

R^1 is ~~hydrogen~~, fluorine [[,]] or chlorine,

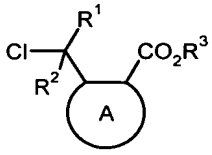
R^2 is hydrogen, ~~fluorine, or chlorine,~~

R^3 is C_1-C_6-alkyl,

A is a ~~5-membered heterocycle selected from the group consisting of~~ pyrazole that is substituted by R^4 in the 1-position, and

R^4 is C_1-C_4-alkyl, C_3-C_6-cycloalkyl, C_1-C_4-alkylthio-C_1-C_4-alkyl, C_1-C_4-alkoxy-C_1-C_4-alkyl, or phenyl,

comprising converting a chloromethyl-substituted heterocycle of formula (II)



(II)

in which

R^1 [[,]] is chlorine, and

R^2, R^3, and A are each as defined for formula (I),

to a fluoromethyl-substituted heterocycle of formula (I) in the presence of a fluorinating agent selected from the group consisting of 3 HF / $N(Et)_3$ (Franz reagent), 3 HF / $N(n\text{-}Bu)_3$, and HF/pyridine (Olah's reagent) and optionally in the presence of a diluent.

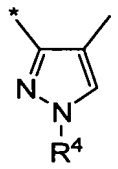
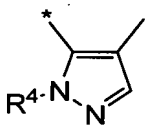
Claim 19 (currently amended): A process according to Claim 18 wherein for the chloromethyl-substituted heterocycle of formula (II),

R^1 is ~~hydrogen, fluorine, or~~ chlorine,

R^2 is hydrogen, ~~fluorine, or chlorine,~~

R^3 is C_1-C_4-alkyl,

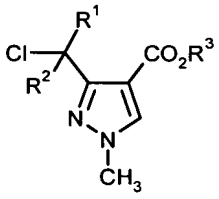
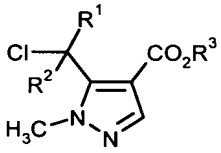
A is a ~~5-membered heterocycle~~ pyrazole selected from the group consisting of


and


where in each case the bond marked by * is joined to the -$CCIR^1R^2$ group and the other bond is joined to the CO_2R^3 ester group, and

R^4 is methyl, ethyl, n-propyl, isopropyl, cyclopropyl, cyclopentyl, cyclohexyl, or phenyl.

Claim 20 (currently amended): A process according to Claim 18 wherein the chloromethyl-substituted heterocycle of formula (II) is selected from the group consisting of compounds of formulas (II-a) and (II-b)


(II-a), and

(II-b),

in which R^1, R^2, and R^3 are as defined for formula (II) in Claim 18.

Claim 21 (currently amended): A process according to Claim 20 in which ~~R^1 is chlorine, R^2 is hydrogen, and~~ R^3 is methyl or ethyl.

Claims 22-23 (canceled)

Claim 24 (previously presented): A process according to Claim 18 wherein the fluorinating agent is 3 HF / $N(Et)_3$ (Franz reagent) or 3 HF / $N(n\text{-}Bu)_3$.

Claim 25 (currently amended): A process according to Claim 18 that [[it]] is carried out at a temperature of 80°C to 170°C.

Claim 26 (currently amended): A process according to Claim 18 that [[it]] is carried out at a temperature of 120°C to 150°C.

Claims 27-33 (canceled)